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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DOT and DES Announce Program to Improve Air Quality** *Signs at Rest Areas will Reduce Vehicle Idling*

Concord – The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) announce a new signage program to reduce vehicle idling at roadside rest areas. New “user friendly” signs are being installed by DOT at roadside information and rest areas to inform drivers, particularly heavy-duty diesel truck drivers, about state regulations that limit idling time. The goal of the program is to reduce diesel exhaust emissions and improve the state’s air quality.

Signs that direct drivers to “Please Turn Engine Off When Parked” are being installed near the entrances of roadside information and rest areas. Signs that say “Thank You for Not Idling” are posted close to area exits. The first signs were installed recently at the following locations. Motorists will soon be seeing them at all the major roadside information areas (see attached photo).

- I-93 Hooksett Toll northbound pullover.
- Hooksett Rest Area/Liquor Store off I-93 northbound.
- Nashua Rest Area/Welcome Center off Everett Turnpike Exit 6.
- Hampton Park & Ride off NH 101 Exit 13 and NH 27.
- Epping Park & Ride off NH 101 Exit 7 and NH 125.
- Salem Rest Area/Welcome Center off I-93 northbound.
- Windham Weigh Stations off I-93 northbound and southbound.

“This is a great way to remind all drivers, especially truck drivers, of the importance of limiting idling time whenever practical,” noted Michael Nolin, DES Commissioner. “We are working very closely with DOT to inform people of the regulations and how they can protect their health and improve air quality by reducing diesel exhaust from heavy-duty vehicles.”

The new signs are part of a statewide education and outreach program aimed at reducing diesel exhaust from heavy-duty vehicles. Besides focusing on reducing idling time, the program is aimed at reducing black smoke emissions (known as opacity) from on-road vehicles through free smoke opacity testing and outreach to truck and bus fleet managers and drivers. The overall program is being funded through the federal DOT Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program.

Carol Murray, DOT Commissioner said, “Our effort to install ‘no idling’ signs at the highway rest areas is an excellent example of state agencies working together toward a common goal.

Both DES and DOT are concerned with reducing the impact of motor vehicle exhaust emissions on public health and air quality.”

Diesel exhaust has been classified as a probable human carcinogen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and numerous scientific studies indicate that excess exposure to diesel exhaust can cause lung damage, respiratory problems, premature death, and lung cancer. By reducing truck idling, drivers are protecting their own health and the health of people around them, while at the same time saving money on fuel costs and engine wear and tear.

For more information on the new signs at highway information and rest areas, contact William Lambert, DOT, at (603) 271-2291. For information on motor vehicle emission reduction programs, contact Mike Fitzgerald, DES, at (603) 271-6390.

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